





1796

PUBLIC INJURIES
REQUIRE
PUBLIC JUSTICE:
OR, AN
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
CAUSES of the MISCARRIAGE
Of the late
SECRET EXPEDITION
TO THE
COAST of FRANCE.

In which

All the Transactions relative thereto are impartially examined; the Delays and Hindrances which retarded, and at last totally prevented its Execution, minutely traced; and the several Operations of the Fleet and Army, while before *Rocheport*, exactly related.

BEING

A clear and distinct View of this Famous, but Unfortunate EXPEDITION.

To which is prefixed,

An Accurate Map of the *French* Coast, the Situation of *Rocheport*, and the adjacent Islands, the Station of our Ships, and the Places intended for Landing.

LONDON:

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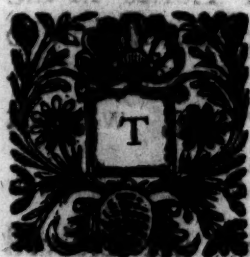
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AN
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
CAUSES of the MISCARRIAGE
OF THE LATE
SECRET EXPEDITION.



THE Miscarriage of the Expedition in the *Mediterranean*, under Admiral *Byng*, in 1756, when he was sent to relieve *Minorca*, was the greatest Dishonour to the *British* Flag that it had suffered for a long Time. The Admiral, who had the sole Direction of it, was tried by a Court Martial, condemned, and deservedly suffered for his Misconduct on that Occasion; nor did the Ministers who concerted it, escape very severe Censures from the Public. But it is not necessary to enter into the Particulars of that unhappy Affair, which is already sufficiently known

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known to the World; and I only mention it to observe, that the late Secret Expedition to the Coast of *France*, was contrived and planned by another Set of Ministers, under the Auspices of the Hon. Mr. *Pitt*, lately made principal Secretary of State; the Admirals appointed for it were Men of Courage and Conduct, and whose Fidelity to their King and Country was never questioned; and the General had behaved well upon former Occasions. To Gentlemen of such Characters, Mr. *Pitt* imagined he might safely trust the Conduct of an Expedition of the last Importance to his Country; and had it been carried into Execution with the same Wisdom and Spirit with which it was concerted, no Man doubts but *France* would have received a considerable Blow from such a Force as they carried with them; such as might have restored the Honour of the *British* Flag, repaired our Losses in the *Mediterranean*, and given some Satisfaction to the Nation in general, which had been at an immense Expence in fitting out Fleets, without reaping either Honour or Advantage.

It's certain, this Enterprize was not resolved upon, without duly weighing as well the Hazard as the Probability of the Success of it. The Hazards to be encountered, were chiefly those at Sea; from the Calms, Winds or Tempests, which the Fleet might possibly meet with, before it arrived at the Place of its Destination. The Probability of its Success arose from many Circumstances, of which the Ministry were well apprized. They knew that *France* had drawn from her

her Coasts the greatest Part of her Forces to send them into *Germany* : They were well assured, by a Gentleman who had been at *Rochefort*, that the Place was easy of Access, and that the Ditch had so great Inequalities of Ground, that it could not be filled with Water ; that the Town was but weakly fortified, especially on one Side, and that there were but few Troops either in the Place or on the Coast.

ON the Certainty of these Advices, the Ministry laid the Plan of this Expedition ; and to secure the Success of it, ordered a formidable Fleet to be assembled at *Spithead*, a large Number of Transports to be sent from the *Downs*, in order to take on board 10,000 Land Forces, which they ordered to march to *Portsmouth*, and, till the Transports arrived, to be encamped in the *Isle of Wight* to prevent their Desertion. The Fleet was ready for sailing in the Beginning of *August*, but could not be joined by the Transports, which were kept back by contrary Winds till *September*.

THE Design of the Expedition was kept an impenetrable Secret, nor could any one say, otherwise than by Guess, what was the Object of its Destination. In *France*, the Report of the Terribleness of this Fleet, spread such a Consternation along the Coast, that in some Places they dug up the Pavement of their Streets to be prepared for the *English* Bombs, which they expected every Moment to fall on them ; in others, they packed up the best of their Goods, which they sent up higher into the Country ; and even at
Toulon,

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Toulon, which is reckoned the strongest Sea-port on that Side of France, they reinforced their Garrison, added more Guns to their Forts, and put it in the best Posture of Defence they could, to receive the Visit which they expected from this formidable Fleet. How formidable it was may be estimated from the following List, including those in Port, and some that were to join them in a certain Latitude, viz.

Ships of the Line of Battle	28
Frigates	22
Transports	68
Fire-Ships	5
Bomb-Ketches	2
Hospital-Ships	2
Store-Ships	2
	129

Besides *Folkstone* and *Deal* Cutters. The Admirals who commanded this Fleet, were, *Hawke*, *Knowles*, and *Broderick*.

September 5, the whole Fleet set Sail on the intended Expedition, to the Western Coasts of France; but the principal Object, was, the taking of *Rochefort*, and destroying the Ships, Forts, Stores and Magazines, in that Harbour; a Place reckoned one of their principal Ports for building their Men of War, and consequently, that a vast Quantity of Stores of all Sorts is always lodged there; and had our Project taken Effect according to the Plan of it, the Navy of France would have suffered such a Wound, as would not soon, nor easily have been cured.

Rochefort,

ROCHEFORT, in *Latin Rupisfortium*, situated on the River *Charante*, a League and a half distant from its Mouth, three from *Brouage* to the West, Six from *Rochelle* to the South, and has a very convenient Harbour. It was formerly but a Small Village, belonging to a private Family, from whom Lewis XIV bought it in the Year 1664, to build a City here. It had been observed, that from this Place to the Sea, the River *Charante*, was deep enough to carry the largest Ships, the Bottom excellent for anchoring, and the Banks very even and solid; whereupon it was resolved to build here a City, which was done accordingly: So that here are all the necessary Magazines and Warehouses for Shipping; and a most commodious and large Dock, where, in the Year 1690, they built fourteen Gallies, and two large Men of War in less than eight Months Time. There are here several other Stately Buildings, a Victualling Warehouse, a Foundery, a Manufactory of Sail-Cloth, the *Hôtel* called *Cazernes*, for the Education of three hundred Gentlemen of Noble Families, designed to serve in the Navy, and who are taught at the King's Expence all that they must know for that Purpose: The *Hôtel* serves now to lodge the Marines; an Hospital for Sick Seamen and Soldiers, &c. The Entrance of the River and Road are defended by several Forts, which must be reduced before the City can be attack'd; and a League below *Rochefort*, there is a long Staccado across the River, which is defended by a Fort, which has 44 Guns. Tho' this City is
in

in the Province of *Saintonge*, yet it is under the Governor of *Aunis*.

ROCHELLE, in *Latin* *Rupella*, and formerly *Portus Saintonum*, because it was dependant on *Saintonge*, has always been a very considerable Port and Trading Town. It is the Capital of the Province of *Aunis*, situated over against the Isle of *Rhee*, and but two Leagues distant from it, and four from that of *Oleron*, ten Leagues distant from *Saintes* to the North West, and twenty from *Poitiers* to the South West. This being the chief City of the Reformed in *France*, suffered very much during the Civil Wars, and was often valiantly defended, and long possessed by that Party, till at length *Lewis XIII.*, after a long and famous Siege, made himself Master of it in the Year 1628, chiefly by an admirable Rampart or Bank of Earth, which *Cardinal Richelieu* caused to be raised against it on the Side of the Walls and Fortifications to be demolished, except only two Towers, which defend the Port: But *Lewis XIV.* caused New and strong Fortifications to be made about it. The Port is almost round, and about fifteen hundred Paces in Compass; it is defended by two Towers, the one is a Prison for State Criminals, and the other is called the Tower of the Chain. No Ship can enter into the Harbour without Leave of the Governor or Captain of the last Tower. They drive here a considerable Trade to the Islands of *America*, and the *English*, *Dutch*, *Swedes* and *Danes*, send here yearly a vast Number of Ships to load Wine, Brandy, Salt, Paper, Linen

Linen Cloth, and Serges. The Merchants here send all the Necessaries of Life into *America*, and bring back from it the Product of those Countries. Their chief Manufacture is the refining of Sugar; they have also set up a Manufacture of Earthen Ware, which succeeds very well. The City is well built, the Streets are broad and strait; and the Houses neat and fine, supported with Piazzas and Porticos, under which one is shelter'd from the Rain and Sun. In the Year 1649, the Episcopal See of *Maillerais* was removed hither, and the Isle of *Rhee*, together with many other neighbouring Places, to the Number of about an hundred Towns and Villages, were taken from the Diocese of *Saintes*, and added to this. The Bishop is Suffragan to the Archbishop of *Bordeaux*. There is here a College of Jesuits, where all the Forms are taught to Philosophy inclusively, a College of Physick, and a School of Anatomy and Botany for the Instruction of young Surgeons and Apothecaries; and a Seminary, where the Jesuits teach Divinity to those who design to take Orders. Here is likewise a Presidial, a Sovereign Court for the Saltmarshes in the West, and a Court of the Mint.

THE Isle of *Rhee* lies opposite to *Rochele*, and about two Leagues from it. This Island hath nothing remarkable in it, besides a huge, strong, old-fashion'd Castle; and memorable for the Expedition to it in 1628, under the Duke of *Buckingham*. As this Enterprize was remarkable for the strange Miscarriage of it, thro' the Mischance,

conduct, Ignorance, and Cowardice of the Commander in chief, and therefore may bear some Analogy to the late Voyage of our Fleet to *Roche-fort*, at no great Distance from *Rhee*, it will not be amiss to give some Account of it, as related by Col. *Fleetwood*, who had a Command in it.

THIS Expedition was privately concerted between the King and Council, in order to extinguish the Ignominy of the former Service at *Cales*, and to give the Duke an Opportunity of recovering his lost Honour. But tho' the Scheme was secretly contriv'd, it was soon divulged by the Duke, and consequently known to the Enemy, even before it was begun.

THE Duke, who was more inclin'd to his Pleasures than to any warlike Service, would willingly have relinquish'd his Charge, had he not been spurr'd on by the King, whose Favourite he was.

WHEN the Fleet was ready, it put to Sea; where whatever was propos'd for the Good of the Service, by the Officers who had Knowledge and Experience, he was sure to gainsay it, that so all the good Fortune that might attend the Enterprize, might be ascribed to his own Genius and Ability.

BEING arrived before the Island, Part of the Army immediately landed, and was instantly attack'd by the Enemy, and not being reinforc'd by

by the Duke as they expected, were forced to retire back to their Ships, with the Loss of some Men of Note.

THREE Days afterwards, they went on Shore again with a greater Force, fortified themselves, and constrained the Enemy to retire to their Fort, and took some Prisoners. Upon viewing the Strength and Compass of the Fort, and understanding it was well victualled, they retired out of the Reach of its Cannon, but environed it on all Sides, and for a good while deprived it of all Succours both by Sea and Land. This was owing to the Management and Conduct of Sir *John Burrows*, a Gentleman of known Valour and Experience, and in great Esteem with the Army.

THEY battered the Place for two Months, but it was so strong, that no Impression could be made upon it; it was therefore Sir *John Burrow's* Advice, to continue to beleager it, till they should starve the Defendants into a Surrender.

THE Duke was infinitely chagrin'd, that Sir *John* was in so great Credit in the Army, and himself so little regarded, and therefore, endeavoured to allure the Hearts of the Soldiers from him, by giving the Pay of those who did not comply, to those who did; which bred such Murmuring among them, as must have ended in a Mutiny, had not Sir *John* prudently put a Stop to it; both Parties seemed reconciled, and celebrated their Amity by a private Supper in the

Duke's Tent. But such is the Nature of Malice, that it is never appeased, whatever Appearance it may put on. For the next Morning, as Sir *John* was surveying his Trenches, and out of the Reach of Danger from the Fort, he was struck dead in the Place by a Musket-Shot from an unknown Hand. This caused a fresh Contention throughout the Camp, and they were ready to run upon one another's Swords; but the Duke, by Rewards, and other Ways, at length made all quiet.

ABOUT the same Time, News was brought, that the *French* King approached to raise the Siege; upon which, the Duke, for the Safety of his own Person, withdrew two of the best Regiments from the sure Places which Sir *John Burrows* had allotted them, and by this Means left them unguarded; which, the *French* Convoys perceiving, entered the same Night, and relieved the Fort with all Manner of Provisions, and so every Night without Interruption, the Duke not suffering his Men to encounter them, for Fear the *French* King should fall on his Back, when in Truth there was neither King nor *French* Army there.

WHEN the Fort was thus victualled and manned, the Garrison began to come out and brave them, yet the Duke would not permit his Men to attack them, or even to continue their own Battery; which greatly discontented the Officers; and, when they demanded whether he intended to enthrall them to his own ignoble Pleasure, or

to starve them instead of the Enemy ; his only Answer was, That he was their General, and so they should know by the strict Hand he would carry over them. This, the prime Officers could not well relish, yet, to prevent Mutiny, smother'd their Grudge. He assured them, however, That he had secret Intelligence out of the Fort, that most of their best Soldiers had conveyed themselves away, and that the Remainder (if they lay still intrenched) would soon become their Vassals : When at the same Time, [he knew that the next Day the Garrison intended to make their grand Sally ; to avoid the Danger of which, he dressed one of his own Followers, very much like him, in his Warlike Habit and Colours, with Instructions suitable to the Deceit ; and then disguising himself like a poor sick Soldier, got a Ship-board, leaving his Troops ignorant of the bloody Intent towards them.

IMMEDIATELY upon this, the Garrison sallied out in vast Numbers and assaulted our Troops, mostly unarmed, in their Trenches, with such Violence, that they were glad to fly for their Lives, which indeed, but few could save, being miserably slaughtered, drove into Salt-pits, or drowned, before they could get to their Ships.

DURING the Conflict, the counterfeit General fought very resolutely, and received some Wounds for his Pains, which made those who were not in the Secret, commend him for his Valour ; nor were they undeceived till two Days afterwards, when (says the Author) we should

have presently mortaliz'd his Carcass (meaning the Duke's) but that we thought it fitter to let him die at Home, by the unquestionable Hand of Parliament.

BUT in this the Colonel was mistaken; for the Duke knew the King would protect him against all the Efforts of the Parliament.

THE Isle of *Oleron* is only remarkable for a Set of Laws, framed and established there some Ages since, by some Merchants, and are still much regarded by most of the commercial Nations. But it is Time to return from this long Digression to our first Purpose.

SIR *John Mordaunt*, who was appointed General of the Land Forces designed to serve in this Expedition, on reviewing the Troops in the *Isle of Wight*, before they embark'd on Board the Transports, exhorted every Regiment to behave like *Britons*; and to the Officers, he desired they would take with them no unnecessary Baggage, as the Expedition was to be *very Short and very Sharp*. Sir *John* was certainly a true Prophet with regard to the first Part of his Prediction; but as to the latter, we must judge of it by the Sequel.

THE Forces being all embarked, the Fleet set Sail with a fair Wind, and at length arrived in the Bay of *Biscay*, on the *French Coast*, but at a considerable Distance from Land. How the Commanders proceeded to execute their Commissions,

missions, and what their Councils and Operations in Consequence thereof were, will best appear from the following Extract of a Letter from an Officer who was engaged in the Expedition.

‘ OUR Destination continued doubtful till the
 ‘ 14th, when, from our bearing down in the Bay
 ‘ of *Biscay*, it became evident that we intend-
 ‘ ed for some Part of the Coast of *France*. Some
 ‘ general Orders were issued from on Board the
 ‘ *Ramillies* on the 15th, concerning the Manner
 ‘ in which we were intended to land, had not
 ‘ some strange Fatality interposed. From the
 ‘ Course we steered, it now became evident that
 ‘ we were designed either against *Rockelle* or
 ‘ *Rochefort*, or to make a Descent upon the Isles of
 ‘ *Rhee* or *Oleron*. On the 19th, about Eight in
 ‘ the Evening, the whole Fleet was surprized
 ‘ with a Signal to lay too; the Wind being fair,
 ‘ the Night clear, and we upwards of twenty
 ‘ Leagues from the Land; and thus we continued
 ‘ for eight Hours before we had a Signal to make
 ‘ Sail. On the 20th, about Three in the After-
 ‘ noon, we made the Isle of *Oleron*; and soon
 ‘ after, a *French* Man of War stood almost in
 ‘ the Middle of our Fleet; but perceiving her
 ‘ Mistake, bore away right before the Wind, un-
 ‘ der all the Sail She could croud; and there was
 ‘ no Signal to chace till it was too late, for four of
 ‘ our Men of War had the Pleasure to see her
 ‘ safe into *Garonne*.

‘ THE next Day we beat to the Windward off
 ‘ the Isle of *Oleron*, till towards Evening, when
 ‘ the

the Fleet hoisted *English* Colours, and stood in for the Land; but the Wind coming suddenly a-head, we were obliged to come to an Anchor.

On the 22d we weighed, and stood in for the Land; but there being no Wind, were obliged about Noon to let go our Anchors. About Three in the Afternoon the Fleet made Sail, steering between the Islands of *Rbee* and *Oleron*, and came again to an Anchor at Ten the same Night. Some Orders dated the 21st on Board the *Ramillies* by Sir *John Mordaunt*, (concerning the Order and Disposition of the Officers and Soldiers, and promising that such Officers and Men as distinguish'd themselves should be recommended in the strongest Manner to his Majesty and the Duke) were received with universal Acclamation, as indeed they were finely calculated to inspire the Officers with that Spirit, which is the very Soul of the Army in Time of Action.

THE 23d about Eight in the Morning, the Van of our Fleet sail'd towards the Island of *Aix*, which lies in the Mouth of the River leading up to *Rockefort*; the rest of the Ships anchoring at two Leagues Distance from the Island. Part of our Land Forces were put on Shore to take Possession of this important Island. The Fort is said to have been a Piece of *Vauban's* own Architecture; and when the Works which were now adding towards the Sea had been finished, would have been remarkably strong

' strong; but in its present Situation, if Capt.
 ' *How* had been acquainted with its Strength, he
 ' would rather have made the Attack in his
 ' Long-boat than in the *Magnamine*; for the
 ' Enemy, for Want of Embrasures to cover them,
 ' must, by a few Volleys of small Arms, have
 ' been obliged to fly from their Guns. The
 ' Circumference of this Island, as near as I could
 ' guess, is about five *English* Miles; and it pro-
 ' duces nothing but a poor Kind of Wine, which;
 ' for this Year, we did all in our Power to de-
 ' stroy. It were impossible to tell the Number
 ' of Boat-loads of Grapes that were carried on
 ' Board every Ship in the Fleet. Tho' this our
 ' first Conquest was of so little Importance, yet,
 ' as an Omen of further Success, it gave vast
 ' Spirits to the whole Fleet. But five Days did
 ' we spend in the greatest seeming Inactivity,
 ' within full View of *Rochelle*, and the whole Coast.
 ' I suppose our Chiefs had their Reasons for this
 ' Delay; but to us, who were not in their Councils
 ' (which were many and frequent) it seem'd de-
 ' signed to give our Enemies Time to collect their
 ' Troops.

' THE Cause of the Delay grew every Day
 ' more impenetrable; when on the 28th in the
 ' Afternoon, the Admiral made a Signal for the
 ' commanding Officers of the Regiments to come
 ' on Board the *Ramillies*, and about Eight in the
 ' Evening, Orders were read on Board every
 ' Transport for landing the Troops that Night,
 ' though we were then at least four Miles from
 ' the Shore. However, the Boats were filled
 ' before

‘ before Midnight, and waited two or three
 ‘ Hours for Signal, when we were surprized with
 ‘ an Order for the Troops to return to their re-
 ‘ spective Ships till further Orders. The two
 ‘ following Days were spent in blowing up the
 ‘ half finished Fortifications in the Island of *Aix* ;
 ‘ on the 1st of *October* we boldly bid Defiance to
 ‘ our Enemies, and made the best of our Way
 ‘ Home. In what Shape our evil Genius appear-
 ‘ ed, a National Enquiry will best determine.’

THE last Clause of this Letter, intimates a
 Consciousness in the Writer, that their Chiefs
 were far from having done their utmost to pro-
 cure Success to this Expedition. It shews like-
 wise, that a great deal of Time was trifled away
 in Councils and Debates, which gave their Ene-
 mies Leisure to collect their Forces, consult the
 best Measures for their own Safety, and frustrate
 those taken for their Destruction. It also appears,
 that the Admiral was not at all pleased with their
 Delays, and therefore summoned the general
 Officers on board his Ship, in order to bring
 them to a speedy Result; upon which, the
 Troops were ordered to land that very Night,
 and for that Purpose the Men were put into
 Boats; but by some malevolent Spirit that pre-
 vailed in their Councils, before Morning this Or-
 der was changed into another, for the Men to re-
 turn to their Ships again. The many Councils
 that had been daily held, had already very much
 delayed the main Action; and now, when they
 came to the very Point of executing the only
 Business they were sent upon, that these should
 be

be found Reasons to deter them from making the least Attempt, is certainly a Mystery that ought to be revealed, and laid open to the very Bottom. And, whoever shall be found culpable, let him bear the Weight of his Country's severest Resentment. But to proceed :

WHILE the Land-Officers were debating in their Council the Practicability of landing their Troops, Admiral *Broderick* was employed in taking the Soundings for the large Ships to cover the Debarkation of the Land Forces. It was resolved they should land by Moon-light ; and when he had got every Thing ready for that Purpose, he received a Message from the General, that he did not think it proper to land till next Morning ; and when Morning came, the General sent him Notice, that a Council of War, consisting of Land-Officers, had resolved not to land at all. Upon which the Admiral wrote to the General, to know whether he had any farther Service for his Majesty's Fleet, if not, he would sail for *England* the next Day.—What were the strong Reasons that determined the General's Council of War to this Resolution of Inactivity, have not yet been made public : But it was said, that two *French* Prisoners gave Information, that the Ditch round *Rochefort*, which was supposed to be a dry Ditch, was filled to the Brim with Water, and that the Garrison could lay the Country for five Miles round under Water.

WE ought to omit no Light that can possibly be given to develop the mysterious Transactions of our pacific Commanders in this notable Expedition. The following is an Extract from a Journal kept by an Officer on Board the Fleet under Sir *Edward Hawke*, of the most remarkable Proceedings, from the Time they set Sail from *England* till their Return.

Sept. 8, we sailed from *Spithead*.

Sep. 14, we bore down in the Bay of *Biscay*.

Sept. 23, the Van, which was led by Capt. *How* in the *Magnamine*, stood towards the Isle of *Aix*, the rest anchoring at the Distance of about two Leagues. It was his Fire, for he brought to as close to the Land as possible, that in a very short Time silenced the Fort; the *Bar-fleur* fired only a few Guns. The Fort however did not strike its Colours till about an Hour after *How* brought to. The Place might have been taken by the *Magnamine's* Long-boat; for as there were no Embrasures, the Men had no Cover from our Small Arms. The Fort, tho' planned by *Vauban*, is not finished, new Works lately been added, which when compleated, have will render it a very strong Place. The Men who were set on Shore to take Possession of it, got abominably drunk, insulted the Inhabitants, laid waste the Island, and brought off as many Grapes as loaded many Boats. This Success, however trifling it may seem, made the Men eager to land on the Continent the same Night.

Sept.

Sept. 24, 5, 6, 7, 8. The small Craft were employ'd in Sounding, and several Councils of War were held. As the Enemy had ~~no~~ less than eight Days Notice of our Design, the more sensible Part whisper'd, that our Stay there was a Feint to deceive the Enemy. We seem'd to have no good Information of any Part for making a Descent.

Sept. 28, For two Days past the Enemy were observed to be encamped in two different Places near the Shore. At eight at Night, Orders were issued to be ready by twelve to go into the Boats to be landed. The Number to be landed at first, amounted to about 1200; when these were set on Shore they were to stand the whole Brunt of the Enemy, till the Boats should row back to the Fleet, which was four Miles out at Sea, and bring a second Embarkation. The Men went chearfully into the Boats by Eleven. After remaining in them about four Hours, an Order came for their Return to their respective Ships.

I would remark upon the latter Part of this Account, that tho' there might not be a Sufficiency of Water to carry our large Men of War nearer than four Miles to the Shore; yet surely there must be Water enough to bear up the Frigates, Cutters, and other small Craft much nearer: If so, I would be glad to know, whether some Use of them might not have been made to annoy the Enemy while our Men were landing? Besides, the Transports, which drew much less Water than the Men of War, might, to my Thinking,

have got at least, within two Miles of the Shore, and if the Distance could have been so much less'n'd, the Debarkation might have been perform'd with much more Celerity, as well as less Danger to the Troops, who, in that Case, would not have been so long expos'd to the Fire of the Enemy, because they would have been reinforced in half the Time that was propos'd by the other Method.

AGAIN: If the Debarkation could have been done by Moon-light, why was it deferr'd till Morning? Was it not probable that the Men on landing would have been more secure from the Fire of the Enemy, at a Time when no certain Aim could be taken, and every Shot must be at random, than in broad Day-light, when they could level their Pieces, small and great, more exactly to the Mark, than it was possible for them to do by a quivering and uncertain Light?

BUT if the Generals had sufficient Grounds (to which we are Strangers) for postponing the Affair till Day-light, pray, Why was it not undertaken then? If they thought it more becoming the Character of an *Englishman* to have his Enemy in full View, and Face to Face, than to fight him in Hugger-mugger, and, as it were, by the Glimmer of a dark Lanthorn, and that their Courage would be much less conspicuous than when they had both Friends and Enemies for their Spectators, why did not they take this more honourable Method? Was it an indifferent Thing whether they made the Attempt or not?

Were

Were they not sensible of the Consequences of the good or ill Success of this Expedition? That in the first Case, the Enemy must needs be extremely damaged; and in the Latter, that as much Prejudice and Dishonour would redound to their native Country? Had they no Regard to their own Reputation? Was the Interest of the Nation of no Weight with them? Could neither the Commands of their Sovereign, nor the Honour of the *British* Arms, which, through a Succession of Ages, had been maintained with so much Valour and Glory, make no Impression upon their timorous Souls, to make one Effort in so good a Cause? If you were only concerned for your own Safety, and the Prolongation of your Lives, that so you might have the longer Enjoyment of your comfortable Estates at Home? Why did you accept a Commission, which you knew must expose you to such Dangers and Difficulties, as would by no Means agree with your Inclination to Ease, Pleasure, and the luxurious Enjoyment of Life? The Camp, and the Field of bloody Conflict, have no Temptations for those who love Quiet and Retirement. They who are in Love with Arms, love them because they are the Means of raising them to Honour and Dignity, and of serving their King and Country. Read the History of *England* (if you have not yet read it) and you will find almost in every Page, some Example worthy your Imitation; of Men who never thought of Danger, when Glory was to be acquired either to themselves or Country. Had *Britons* always had such pusillanimous Creatures as you for their Generals in Chief,

Chief, at the Battles of *Agincourt*, *Cressy*, *Poitiers*, *Blenheim*, &c. the Fame of the *British* Arms would never have made such a noble Figure in History as now it does. The Eye of the World is always upon Men in your high Stations, and every Step they take is examined with the strictest Scrutiny, and both their glorious and inglorious Actions are recorded as Examples to Posterity, either with Encomiums for their exalted Virtue and heroic Deeds, or with Marks of Contempt and Reprobation, for their Successors to avoid, as they would Persons infected with a Plague. The ruling Passion of a true Patriot is the Interest of his Country, with which, no other Consideration comes in Competition. This is the Object to which his Aims and Ends, his Thoughts and Actions are solely directed. This, if he can obtain, he takes more real Satisfaction in, than the Miser in his Heaps of Wealth, or the Man of Pleasure in the most voluptuous Gratification of his Senses. But to whom am I talking? Why, to Men who seem as little inspired with these exalted Sentiments, as the Pedlar's Ass that carries his Wares, is sensible of their Value: To Men who bear a Commission, but seem to have as little Knowledge of the Importance of it, as the Ship that is freighted with the Merchant's Goods, knows the Port to which it is bound, or the Worth of the Goods lodged in its Hold.

THE following Letter from an Officer on Board one of the Transports, in the Road of *Basnes*,

Basgnes, Sept. 30, will give us some farther Insight into this dark Affair.

AFTER telling my own History, says this Writer to his Friend, I imagine you will not be a little curious to hear that of our Expedition, which in every Light is a proper Subject of Curiosity, as I believe there are few amongst us can account for all the Proceedings of our great ones since we arrived here. All I can say is, that after taking the Isle of *Aix*, instead of immediate Orders to land on the Continent, we were surprized to hear of a general Council of War of Land and Sea Officers, and still more to hear, that the intended Attack on *Rochefort*, which was now known to be the Object of the Expedition, was not practicable. It struck a general Damp upon us all, as I never saw either in Officers or Soldiers greater Spirit or Desire to come to Action. And our Astonishment was much greater, as we had the highest Opinion of our Commanders both at Sea and Land, who are all Men of known Valour and Experience. Some Time or other this Mystery will be cleared up.

AFTER this, several other Schemes were proposed; and after many Debates, it was resolved to land in the Night of the 28th, when the Troops were actually in their Boats for that Purpose; I mean the first Division of them, consisting of 1000 or 1500 Men; but a strong Easterly Wind springing up, the Admiral and Captains, who regulated the Debarkation, represented,

cd,

' ed, that the Boats which were towed, could
 ' hardly make Head against Wind and Tide, that
 ' it must be Day-light before the first Division
 ' could get on Shore, and that the second would
 ' be at least six Hours after them ; on which it
 ' was resolved to lay aside the Attempt for that
 ' Night, as it was impossible for so small a Body
 ' as the first Division to land and maintain them-
 ' selves when an Alarm was given, especially so
 ' near *Rochelle* ; and as they could have no Pro-
 ' tection from the Men of War, who lay near
 ' two Leagues off. This we all understand ; but
 ' not so easily why the Attack was not made the
 ' following Night, or, some other Disposition,
 ' the next Day. It was rumour'd, that Camps
 ' and Intrinchments were seen on the Coast, and
 ' that the Time was thought so very critical, that
 ' what was thought adviseable on *Wednesday*
 ' was no longer so on *Thursday*. Of these
 ' Niceties we inferior Officers do not pretend
 ' to judge. However, after mature Deliberation,
 ' it was certainly determin'd that this was to be
 ' our last Attempt, and that the Fleet and Army
 ' were to return with all possible Expedition from
 ' whence they came, which we are preparing to
 ' do."

P. S. ' Since I wrote the above, I have re-
 ' ceived several Hints that a little clear up Part of
 ' my Suspicions, in regard to the Conduct of our
 ' Generals, particularly, that they were not fur-
 ' nished with Artillery to attack *Rochefort* ; that
 ' the Place had a large and high Rampart and
 ' wet Ditch, and consequently could not be as-
 faulted ;

' faulted ; certainly the Enemy had been long
 ' alarmed ; there must be a good Garrison there ;
 ' and being full Moon and clear Weather, the
 ' Nights were as light as Day, so that it was im-
 ' possible to surprize it. If these Things are
 ' true, I can only lament the Fate of Command-
 ' ers who are sent on such lame Expeditions, and
 ' so ill provided. Though I can scarce believe
 ' our Ministry fitted out such a Force, to surprize
 ' a Place 300 Leagues Distance, and especially
 ' after so long Delay and Alarm. Here is ano-
 ' ther Mystery to clear up : But, I am yet to
 ' learn, why, if the immediate Attack on *Roche-*
 ' *fort* was not adviseable, some other Attempts on
 ' the River or the Island were not made, which,
 ' would sure have been preferable to lying so long
 ' idle in the *Bay*.

FROM this Letter it appears, that the Proceed-
 ings of the superior Officers, who had the Com-
 mand of the Fleet, and who had the Direction
 of this great Enterprize, were so mysterious and
 involved, that it was impossible for any Body,
 except those who were in their Councils, to form
 any tolerable Judgment of their Drift and De-
 sign. It was evident to every Body, that by de-
 laying the Attack, it would every Day become
 more difficult, the Spirits of the Army (a Cir-
 cumstance not to be neglected) would be apt to
 flag, under an Apprehension that their Generals
 were fearful of the Event, and that the fairest
 Opportunity we have had since the War began,
 of wounding the Enemy in the most sensible Part,
 might possibly be lost. These were Considera-

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tions

tions that were obvious to every one who made the least Reflection on the Situation of the Fleet, and the Conduct of the Commanders at that Juncture. What the Thoughts and Views of these Gentlemen then were, and upon what Grounds and Motives they so long retarded the Execution of their projected Plan, will appear from the Minutes of their Councils of War, and other Papers and Vouchers, which no Doubt will be laid before, and strictly examined in a Court Martial.

As the Retardation, and consequently the total Loss of the Enterprize, probably proceeded from Difference of Opinion in the Councils of War; and as there have been several Instances, where the public Service has suffered through a Personal Pique between the Land and Sea Commanders in Chief, or at least from their differing in Judgment, with regard to the fittest Measures to be taken for carrying on their Operations, it seems highly necessary that some Method should be thought of, to prevent such fatal Strokes in Time to come. Suppose, for this Purpose, that the supreme Power was lodged in one Person of known Abilities, in any future Enterprize: Would not this answer the End? The Admiral in Chief, and commanding Officer, should each give their Counsel and Opinion, what *may* or *may not* be most feasible to be done, and then *He* (the Supreme in Command) determine according as it appears most conducive to the Success of the Action in Hand. *Blake*, of famous Memory, was both *Admiral* and *General*, and had

had the sole Direction of every Enterprize he took in Hand ; and who is the Sea-Commander that ever acquired more Glory to himself and his Country than he did ?

THE Accounts we have hitherto given of this Expedition, have been collected chiefly from the Letters of some Officers on Board the Fleet ; and the Advices they contain we have the less Reason to doubt the Truth of, as they agree in the Main with that published by Authority on the Return of the Fleet ; which take as follows :

‘ *Whitehall, Oct. 8.* Yesterday an Account
‘ was received, that the Fleet and Transports un-
‘ der the Command of Sir *Edward Hawke*, were
‘ arrived at St. *Helen’s*, having sailed from *Basque*
‘ Road on the 1st Instant. On the 23d of Sep-
‘ tember, Sir *Edward Hawke* ordered the Vice-
‘ Admiral, with his Division, composed of the
‘ *Magnanime*, *Barfleur*, *Neptune*, *Torbay*, and
‘ *Royal William*, Frigates, Bomb-Vessels, Fire-
‘ ships, and Cutters, to attack the Isle of *Aix*,
‘ between the Islands of *Rhee* and *Oleron*.

‘ THE *Magnanime* led, and about Twelve the
‘ Fire began from the Fort, with Shells and great
‘ Guns, and continued while our Ships approach-
‘ ed, till about ten Minutes after One, when the
‘ *Magnanime* brought up within less than 40
‘ Yards of the Fort, where she kept an incessant
‘ Fire for about 35 Minutes, as did the *Barfleur*,
‘ which brought up about 5 Minutes after her,
‘ a-breast of the Fort.

‘ ABOUT three Quarters after One the Firing
 ‘ ceased, the Garrison having struck their Colours
 ‘ and surrendered. They had in the Fort 8
 ‘ Mortars of about 14 Inches Diameter, and 30
 ‘ Guns ; sixteen of which were 18, and the Re-
 ‘ mainder about 14 Pounders. The *Magnanime*,
 ‘ though damaged in her Rigging, Yards and
 ‘ Masts, yet had only two Soldiers killed, and
 ‘ seven or eight wounded. The Works of this
 ‘ Fort have been since blown up.

‘ ON the 29th of *September*, the Resolution
 ‘ was taken to return to *England*, no Attempt
 ‘ having been made to land on the Coast of
 ‘ *France*.’

IT is not easy to express the Surprise, the In-
 dignation and Resentment, which People of all
 Ranks and Degrees discovered on the News of
 the Return of the Fleet, without having effected
 any Thing of Consequence. But, when it was
 publickly known, in what Manner this Expedi-
 tion had been conducted, that so little had been
 done to annoy the Enemy, and that no Attempt
 had been made on the Place which was the chief
 Object of its Destination, the whole Nation was
 in a Ferment ; and though Nobody knew on
 whom directly to place the Blame, yet, as is usual
 in Miscarriages so notorious, they presently turn-
 ed their Eyes to the Ministers who planned the
 Scheme, and therefore were supposed to be guilty
 of some sinister Practices, and though they seem-
 ed solicitous to have it executed to its full Extent,
 yet having some By-ends to serve, inconsistent
 with

with the national Interest, the Commanders had secret Instructions to make a Parade, form unsurmountable Difficulties, and so return. One Cause suggested was, that if we proceeded with Vigour, and any considerable Damage was done to the Enemy, the *French* wou'd for ever keep Possession of *Han—r*; or, if they cou'd not, that they would lay it waste from End to End. This Notion but too generally prevail'd, to the Prejudice not only of the Ministers, but of his M—— himself, who, it was thought, preferr'd the Safety of his G——n Dominions to the most important Interests of *England*. To wipe off so foul an Aspersion, and to confute so malicious and ill-grounded a Surmize, it was judg'd necessary to convince the World, that the Miscarriage of the Expedition was no Way imputable to the Ministry, or any higher Authority. For which Purpose the following Copy of a Letter was inserted in the *London Gazette*.

WHITEHALL, Oct. 15, Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary Pitt to Sir Edward Hawke, and to Sir John Mordaunt, dated Whitehall, Sept. 15, 1757, dispatched by the Viper Sloop, and received by them on Board the Ramilies the 22d of September.

‘S I R,

‘His Majesty, by his secret Instructions,
‘dated the 5th Day of *August* last, having directed the Return of the Fleet under your Command, together with the Land Forces on Board,
‘so as to be in *England* at, or about, or as near

“ as may be, the End of *September*, unless the
 “ Circumstances of the Ships and Forces, shall
 “ necessarily require their Return sooner”; ‘ I am
 “ now to signify to you the King’s Pleasure, that
 “ you do not consider the above-mention’d Time,
 “ limited for your Return, as intended, in any
 “ Manner, to affect, or interfere with the full
 “ Execution of the first and principal Object of
 “ the Expedition ; namely, “ Attempting, as far
 “ as it shall be found Practicable, a Descent on
 “ the *French Coast*, at or near *Rochefort*, in or-
 “ der to attack, if practicable, and by a vigorous
 “ Impression, force that Place, and to burn and
 “ destroy to the utmost of your Power, all
 “ Shipping, Docks, Magazines, and Arsenals,
 “ that shall be found there, and exert such other
 “ Efforts, as shall be judged most proper for
 “ annoying the Enemy”. ‘ And with regard to
 “ any other particular Attempt, which, agreeably
 “ to your Orders, you shall have commenced,
 “ and in the Execution whereof you shall be ac-
 “ tually engaged, it is also his Majesty’s Pleasure,
 “ that you do not desist from, or break up the
 “ same, merely and solely on Account of the
 “ Time limited for your Return, by the Instruc-
 “ tions above-mentioned ; and that, notwith-
 “ standing the same, you do continue, with the
 “ Fleet, such a farther Number of Days, as may
 “ afford a competent Time, for the Completion
 “ of any Operations under the above Circum-
 “ stances ; after which you are to take Care and
 “ return, with the Fleet under your Command,
 “ and the Forces, on Board, in the Manner di-
 “ rected by your former Instructions.

I am, &c.

W. PITT.
HERE

HERE then we see the Ministry entirely clear'd from the Imputation of the least Design to retard or frustrate the Enterprize ; so far from it, that it affords a strong Proof of their sincere and earnest Desire that it should succeed. As Mr. *Pitt* is supposed to have had a chief Hand in planning this Expedition, so the bad Success that attended it, may easily be imagin'd, the more deeply affected him. The Commanders pitch'd upon to conduct it, were Men in great Reputation for their Probity, Courage, and Experience, and the Forces under their Command were judg'd sufficient to accomplish the Business they were sent upon. Notwithstanding which, to have an Enterprize of such Importance, the first concerted since his late coming into the Ministry, blasted with such evident Tokens of Timidity and ill Management, was enough to weigh down his Spirits, and make him despair, with his best Endeavours, ever to do his Country any considerable Service. The following Letter, which was handed about at *Bath*, is a Proof of his inexpressible Grief for the Mis-carriage of the late Expedition on the Coast of *France*.

‘ Dear Sir,

‘ I have this Morning receiv'd a Letter from
 • Mr. *Pitt*, which begins with saying, “ that
 “ his Heart was broke.”

‘ It appears, that the Consternation in *France*
 ‘ upon the Approach of the *English* Fleet was
 ‘ not to be imagin'd ; that notwithstanding the
 ‘ Boast of the *French*, there were only 4000 regu-
 ‘ lar

' lar Troops upon the Coast ; whereas the Num-
 ' that we sent was 10,000. That upon the Ar-
 ' rival of the Fleet off *Rocheport*, the King's own
 ' Guards were sent away by forced Marches, who
 ' however could not have arrived till the 10th of
 ' this Month (*October*) at the very soonest ;
 ' which would have been 16 Days after our Men
 ' ought to have landed. That this Terror was
 ' so great amongst the *French*, that the Fort we
 ' took defended itself only 34 Minutes, tho' but
 ' two Ships; Capt. *How* and Capt. *Greaves*, at-
 ' tacked it ; the Complements of which was not
 ' above one Third more than the Garrison : That
 ' notwithstanding this surprizing Success, which
 ' happen'd on the 27th, they all agreed to come
 ' back on the 29th, without so much as attempt-
 ' ing to land, or to execute the Orders they were
 ' sent with.'

BUT perhaps, all that has been said to justify
 our Ministers, and clear them from contributing
 to our late Disgrace, some will call a mere
 Grimace, and an Artifice, to screen their secret
 iniquitous Practices from the View of the Pub-
 lic. In order therefore to set the Matter in as
 clear a Light as possibly I can, and that the Sad-
 dle may be laid upon the right Horse, I will ex-
 tract a few Paragraphs from a Pamphlet wrote
 by one who was a *Voluntier* in the Expedition.

' THAT I may, says the Writer, entirely re-
 ' move all Suspicion of the Expedition having
 ' been originally intended only as a Sham Arma-
 ' ment, or that we were influenced by *Hano-*
 ' *verian*

' *verian* Considerations, it may not be amiss to
 ' inform the Public upon what Grounds the Ex-
 ' pedition was founded. Know then, that some
 ' Years ago, the Gentleman who accompanied
 ' us in the Capacity of chief Engineer, had, in
 ' his Travels thro' *France*, an Opportunity, by
 ' the Complaisance of the Governor of *Roche-*
 ' *fort*, of taking a deliberate View of that Place.
 ' He saw several Ships then upon the Stocks, and
 ' a considerable Quantity of naval Stores. He
 ' likewise observed the Fortifications to be ex-
 ' tremely weak, and in many Places unfinished.
 ' This he lately communicated to the Ministry,
 ' and gave it as his Opinion, that *Roche*
 ' *fort* was in no Condition of Defence; that it might
 ' easily be taken by Assault; and the Shipping
 ' and Stores as easily destroy'd. He confessed,
 ' that for Fear his Papers might be searched;
 ' he had not dared to take a Plan of the Works;
 ' but that he could sufficiently depend upon his
 ' Memory, to assert positively the Truth of what
 ' he had said. There needs no extraordinary
 ' Skill in Politicks, to conceive how much our
 ' Success in such an Attempt would have dis-
 ' tressed the Enemy. The Ministry gave Ear
 ' to his Design, and the necessary Preparations
 ' were accordingly made; which, tho' they were
 ' undoubtedly expensive, yet, if we had done
 ' our Duty, I am convinced the Design would
 ' have been found sufficiently adequate.

' I have indeed so great an Opinion of our
 ' naval Power, that I have often been surprized
 ' we do not more frequently employ it in this
 ' Manner.

' Manner. I am sure, at least we might keep their
 ' Armies at Home to guard their Coasts, if we
 ' did but use our Strength so far as to make them
 ' afraid of our Fleets. We have in general, too
 ' dreadful an Opinion of Forts and Batteries :—
 ' I scarce believe there is a Sea-port in the World
 ' that might not be taken by naval Force. Suppose, for Instance, instead of falling down to
 ' the Bottom of the Bay, we had dared to attack
 ' *Brest*, might not the Land Forces have been
 ' disembarked at a Distance from the Place, so
 ' as to have stormed it at the same Instant that
 ' the Ships began to fire ? Is it not almost certain
 ' that, in the Surprize, they would have surrendered ? I own it would have appeared a daring
 ' Enterprize ; so much the better, so much greater
 ' the Astonishment, and, consequently, so much
 ' the greater our Prospect of succeeding. How
 ' many Instances have we in History, of great
 ' Attempts succeeding, merely because they were
 ' thought impracticable by the Enemy ? Thus
 ' much I know, at least, that a desperate Situation, like ours, requires desperate Means of Relief. And let not any one imagine, from what
 ' he shall read in this Pamphlet, that we have no
 ' Seeds of true Valour left amongst us ; on the
 ' contrary, I am convinced from what I have
 ' seen, even upon this Expedition, that our
 ' Army in general is equal to any Undertaking ;
 ' nor am I less certain that there may be found
 ' Commanders, that would answer our most
 ' Sanguine Expectation.

' I should be glad to ask the Generals upon this
 ' Expedition, Whether, when they come to re-

' flect

‘ fleet coolly upon what passed, they do not re-
 ‘ collect their having imprudently admitted a
 ‘ certain Gentleman into their Councils (I do
 ‘ not say he is an *Englishman*) who had no
 ‘ Command? Are they now satisfied with their
 ‘ having listened to him?’

FROM hence it appears, that our Ministers, were well inform’d of the State of *Rochefort*, that an Attack upon it was so far from being impracticable, that there would have been no great Difficulty in taking it by Assault; that the Scheme of the Expedition was well laid, and that there was all the Reason in the World to expect a happy Issue to it, had it been as well executed. Why it did not turn out to Expectation, the Writer seems to intimate in the last Paragraph. There was, it seems, a sly Snake in the Grass, a false Brother had crept into their Councils with a Design to puzzle, confound, and render abortive their wisest Consultations. If this be true, it was certainly a sad Oversight amongst our Chiefs, and great Weakness to suffer themselves to be influenced by one, who, properly, had no Business amongst them, since he had no Command.

It has been before hinted, that a Difference of Opinion among the Officers, in the Councils of War held off *Rochefort*, was the Occasion or principal Cause of the Miscarriage of the Undertaking. It may not be amiss therefore if we enter a little into the Nature of this Sort of Councils, which instead of being salutary, but

too frequently prove destructive to a good Design. The Author of a Paper call'd the *Patriot* has given us a good Description of these Councils.

" IT has lately been the Misfortune of *Britain*, says this Writer, to have the grand Business of the Nation retarded at Home by Party Debates, and the Success of her Arms abroad frustrated by tame Assemblies and *Councils of War*.

" WHEN a Commander in Chief holds such Councils, to deliberate whether, or not, he shall carry his Orders into Execution, there is certainly great Room to entertain Suspicions of his Conduct.

" FROM such cautious Proceedings we may be led to conclude, that he is either afraid of doing his Duty, or that he has received some *Secret* Counter-Orders to warrant his Inactivity, and that therefore he chuses to screen himself under the Resolutions of a Council of War, as a colourable Pretext for not pursuing his public and *visible* Orders.

" INDEED it may be prudent in a General, to advise with his Officers, about the particular *Means* of executing Orders; but whether it is advisable to execute them, or not, ought to be the Determination of his own Judgment.

" IT is easy to conceive, that if a Commanders in Chief, intimates his Inclinations to the inferior Officers,

Officers, he will find no great Difficulty in procuring a Majority to acquiesce in his Opinion. Besides, the very calling a Council of War to deliberate whether he shall execute his Orders, or not, is a sufficient Intimation, that he is inclined to pacific Measures; and in such Case, no doubt, the inferior Officers will not fail to adapt their Advice to the General's Disposition; for Few are animated with such Enthusiastic Valour, as to give their Votes for braving the Dangers of War, when their General affords them so handsome a Plea for keeping out of Harm's Way.

"If the mysterious Reasons are not unravelled, which induced the Conductors of the late Expedition to return without *attempting* to perform the intended Service, we can never hope to succeed in any future Undertaking.

"PART of their Orders have been inserted in the *Gazette*, for the public Information and Satisfaction, and the Publication does Honour to the Secretary who subscribed them. We are not now under the Administration of a Minister who will countenance Falshood, or seek to palliate Misconduct.

"We are told, in the *Gazette*, openly and ingenuously, that no *Attempt* had been made to land; and, as they were bound up by their Orders, to make a Descent if *practicable*, they have certainly acted in direct Breach of their Duty, if, by their Delays and Deliberations, they rendered

dered that impracticable, which might have been originally feasible.

"IT is disagreeable to reflect, that *England* must once more be disturbed with the melancholy Parade of a Court Martial ; for frequent Court Martials are sure Indications of the Decline of Military Virtue.

"BUT it is to be hoped, that this extraordinary Instance of ill Conduct, will undergo the Cognizance of a higher Judicatory ; and that the Parliament will inspect into this mysterious Transaction.

"As the Meeting of this great Assembly is near at Hand (*this Paper was published a little before their Meeting*) it is much to be wished, that instead of wasting our Time in vague Conjectures and ineffectual Exclamations, we would apply ourselves to make Remonstrances to our several Representatives, and earnestly intreat them studiously and vigorously to investigate the Cause of this shameful Event, by Means of a National Enquiry.

"SUCH an Application from their Constituents, will animate their Zeal ; and when they meet in Parliament, may no Party Dissentions distract their Councils : Such personal Disagreements are always prejudicial to the Nation, but they will now be immediately fatal.

"No Parliament ever assembled under such critical Circumstances ; the Kingdom has this
Year

Year expended above eight Millions and a Half, only to purchase Losses and Disgrace. Fresh Supplies, and large ones too, must be raised next Year; and can it be supposed, that in the present declining State of public Credit, People will be forward to contribute, unless past Injuries are punished, and they perceive a Disposition towards future Amendment?

“THE Fate of this Nation will probably depend on the Operations of the ensuing Sessions. Let the dark Schemes, which have baffled the Hopes of the Public, and frustrated the spirited and well directed Efforts of a Patriot Ministry, be dragged into Light.

“THE Parliamentary Enquiry will now be reversed, and instead of defending the People against the Abuses of the Ministry, we hope they will vindicate the Ministry for the Sake of the People.”

SUCH a Parliamentary Enquiry, as this Writer recommends, is generally allowed to be absolutely necessary. Court Martials may act honestly, but how inclinable they are to favour a delinquent Brother in the same Service with themselves, we may learn from former Experience. When the Nation is injured, both in its Honour and Interest, who so proper to do public Justice, as its own Representatives?

THE Necessity of such an Enquiry would have appear'd, long e're this, in a Multitude of
Addresses

Addressees to the Throne, had the City of *London* led the Way; which in all Likelihood would have happen'd, but for the following Reason.

ON *Friday, Nov. 4*, at a Court of Common-Council at *Guildhall*, a Motion was made to address his Majesty on the Miscarriage of the late Expedition to the Coast of *France*; when the Lord Mayor inform'd the Court, ' That on *Monday Evening October 1*, *William Blair*, Esq; one of the Clerks of his Majesty's most honourable Privy Council, came to the Mansion-house, and acquainted him, that he waited on the Lord Mayor to let him know, his Majesty had given proper Directions for an Enquiry to be forthwith made into the Behaviour of the commanding Officers in the late Expedition against *France*, and the Cause of the Miscarriage of the said Expedition; and, that the Enquiry would be carried on and prosecuted with the utmost Expedition and Vigour; or to that Effect. Whereupon, after some short Debate, the Motion was withdrawn.

THE Royal Word made People easy, and they were satisfied that such an Enquiry as they desired, would soon be made. They were likewise equally sensible, that the Secretary, who had so clearly vindicated his Integrity, would not rest till he had given the Public full Satisfaction, by what Means a Scheme so well laid, so promising of Success, so well calculated to wound the Enemy and redeem the Honour of the Nation, was so wretchedly executed. The Ministry in
general

general were also sensible, how severely the former Ministry had been censured by Admiral Byng and his Friends, and indeed by most People, for being one Cause, and not the least, of the ill Success of the *Mediterranean* Expedition. And as these succeeded in their Places upon the general Complaint of the impolitic Measures of the former, in the Management of the national Concerns. These were piqued in Honour, to clear themselves from such an ignominious Imputation, especially in one of the first Acts of their Administration, and to convince the World, that our Government does not want Heads nor Hearts to serve their Country, in Respect to the directive Part; and as to the executive, the whole Kingdom should be Witness, that, so far from countenancing or favouring any of their Officers, in Respect to their high Birth, or noble Alliances, who shall be found negligent of their Duty, nothing should screen them from the strictest Examination of their Conduct, or from a Punishment adequate to their Crimes, who should be found guilty.

It was not long before the Royal Promise began to operate; for a Board of Enquiry, consisting of some General Officers, &c. was immediately appointed to enquire into the Conduct of the Officers who commanded the Land-Forces in the late secret Expedition. They met for the first Time, on *Tuesday, November 8*, and adjourned to *Saturday the 12th*.

ON *Saturday* they proceeded on the Enquiry. The Journals that were kept on Board the Fleet during the Expedition, and the Minutes of the Councils of War, in which were some florid Speeches of a Sea Commander were introduced. But as those Minutes were not properly authenticated, they were disallowed. General *M——* then read his Defence, and then the Board adjourned till *Monday* the 14th.

ON *Monday* the Board opened about 12 o'Clock, when General *M——* read his Defence; and it being alledged, that Adm—l *Br——* had written a Letter to Adm—l *H——*, which he shewed to the General before he sent it, declaring it to be his Opinion, that the first Embarkation might have been landed, and the Transports returned by Break of Day; the Admiral was called in and examined concerning such Letter, when he proved the Allegation to be true.

THEN the Duke of *M——*, as President, asked several curious and necessary Questions of the General, which, with their Answers, were written down,

COL. *W——* was then called in, at the General's Request, and examined as to his Opinion about landing, and the Attack of Fort *Fouras*, (*see the Plate*) which was intended as a Place of Retreat, if the Troops should not succeed in the Attack of *Rochefort*. The Colonel, on his Examination, said, that the Men might have landed

ed near *Chatelaillon*, notwithstanding the Battery of six Guns at East; but that their Landing might have been prevented by so small a Force as 1000 Foot, and 3 or 400 Horse, because there were many Sand-Hills, which the Forces at Landing would be obliged to climb. As to Fort *Fouras*, it was his Opinion it might have been carried by Storm; as to the best of his Knowledge, it was a weak one, there being only a Platform of 24 Embrazures towards the Water-Side, and as it was on a Peninsula, it might be attacked on all Sides, while the Ships lay before it; that Capt. C—— had offered to batter it with his Ship, and that he proposed a Feint towards *Rochelle* and the Isle of *Rhee*, during the Landing and Attack. The Colonel was then ordered to withdraw, and the Board proceeded to the Examination of Admiral K——, who affirmed, that *Fouras* could not be annoyed or battered by the Ships, for that the Bomb-Vessels could not come nearer than three Miles, and a Bomb could not be thrown above two Miles and three Quarters, tho' charged with all the Powder requisite. He added, that the little Vessel in which he went to reconnoitre the Fort, was a-ground five Times in the Hour. The Generals then read some Instructions which had been given them by Sir *John L——r*, and then the Board adjourned to *Tuesday*.

ON *Tuesday* the 15th, a Message was received from Sir *John L——r*, by a Colonel of the Guards, acquainting the Board, that the Instructions which had been read on *Monday*, as given

by him to the Generals, were given not as Commands, but as Advice, and were founded on the Knowledge which he had acquired by Experience ; which they generally acknowledged.

THE Board then proceeded to examine Col. C—ke, who said, that he was confirmed in the Opinion he had given in to the C—n—l before he went on the Expedition, by the Engineer Commandant, and a Fisherman he took at the Isle of *Aix*, all of whom he was very particular with. He drew, he said, with his Pencil before the Engineer, that Part of *Rochefort* which was the weakest when he was there ; and the Engineer confirmed, that there had been no Alterations since ; and that the dry Ditch could not be overflowed by Reason of the Inequality of the Ground. He added, that the Pilot on Board the *Magnanime*, offered to pilot them into the River *Charante*, which, he said, was very practicable.

ABOUT three o'Clock, the Enquiry being ended, Lord G—S— made a short Speech, signifying, that the most disagreeable Thing, next being tried himself, was that of being appointed to sit on an Enquiry into the Conduct of Gentlemen, whose Courage and Fidelity had been so often tried. Sir Y—M— then thanked the Board for their Candour and Indulgence ; and concluded with the following Speech :

“ I AM conscious of having done my utmost,
 “ to the best of my Judgment, for his Ma-
 “ jesty's

“ jesty’s Service, in the Conduct of this Expe-
 “ dition ; and I have submitted myself voluntarily
 “ and readily to this Examination. I desire no
 “ Favour or Partiality, and I know I shall have
 “ the most exact Justice, in the Report this ho-
 “ nourable Board will make.

“ I APPREHEND, that an Enquiry into the
 “ whole Conduct of an Expedition, without any
 “ Accusation formed, or any Charge laid, is a
 “ Proceeding not quite common ; and however
 “ free from Guilt a Man may feel himself, there
 “ are few who can stand so strict an Examination.

“ THERE is nothing but the high Opinion I
 “ have both of the Justice and Candour of this
 “ Board, could make me easy in such a Situa-
 “ tion. I therefore hope you will be indulgent
 “ to my Errors, but I desire no Mercy for Guilt,
 “ or known Disobedience, and with these Sen-
 “ timents I submit myself to the Court’

THIS Board of Enquiry (it must be observed)
 was not appointed to try, acquit, or condemn
 any Person, or to give their decisive Judgment
 upon the Case before them ; but only to make a
 general Enquiry into the Conduct of the Expe-
 dition ; which, as it had not answered the Hopes
 and Expectations of the Public, nor any Attempt
 been made upon the Place, which was the prin-
 cipal Object of its Destination, it was judged ne-
 cessary, that the Conductors of it should give
 their Reasons why they had not accomplished the
 Business they were sent upon ; and the Board
 were

were only to collect those Reasons, and report them to his Majesty ; who, upon a fair and impartial Report of them, would be able to judge whether they were valid, or not, or whether there were sufficient Grounds to charge the commanding Officers, and which of them, with Delinquency, and, if so, to deliver them over to a Court-Martial.

WHAT Report the Board made to his Majesty, the Public has not been informed ; but there is sufficient Reason to believe, that it was far from being favourable to the General ; because a Court-Martial is actually appointed for his Trial ; where, no Doubt, this intricate and puzzled Affair will be unravelled and sifted to the very Bottom.

A PUBLIC Writer, descanting upon this unfortunate Affair, says, “ It is very natural for a free People to take Fire at any great Loss or Disappointment in War, and to enquire into the Causes of such Events ; because they bear the Charges of the War, and all Persons employed in a military Capacity are to be considered as Servants of the Public, tho’ at the Nomination, and under the Direction of the Crown. Therefore, on the Return of our late great Armament from a fruitless Expedition, we appear very eager to know who has been in Fault ; whether every Thing that was practicable, has been done ? Whether our Troops could have been safely landed on the Coast near *Rochefort* ; and whether they could afterwards have made themselves Masters of the Place, before Marshal *Seneckerre* could have

have collected a Force to drive them back to the Ships?"

THESE he recommends as proper Heads for an Enquiry. But another Writer, in a Letter to Mr. Pitt, demands, by the united Voice of the People, an impartial and vigorous Enquiry.—“If the Commanders appear altogether innocent, let them be acquitted with Honour, and sent to prove again their Zeal and Abilities in another Expedition; if they failed through Ignorance, let them return to—their Closets, to increase their Knowledge; but if from real constitutional Cowardice, or from (what perhaps is still worse) that Caution and Love of Life, the Copcomitants of Ease and Wealth; let them feel the heaviest Hand of Government, without Respect to Rank, Family, or Connections.

IN order to come to the Bottom of this Matter, perhaps some such Queries as the following may be of Use, viz.

1. WHETHER even before the Fleet's coming upon the *French* Coast, there did not appear such a Backwardness to any Attempt, as occasioned a certain Adm—l to declare, that he would comply with his Orders, and go in, whatever was the Consequence?

2. WHY the Fleet lay to eight Hours, which, by the Change or Failure of the Wind, lost, in its Consequences, some Days?

3. WHY

3. WHY, upon a *French* Man of War falling accidentally in among our Transports, the *Magnanime* was ordered to chase, on Board of which was the only Pilot who could undertake to carry the Fleet into the Harbour, and whose Life was, by that Means, endangered; the Loss of which must, of itself, have rendered the Expedition abortive?

4. WHY the Ships of the leading Division were drawn up at half a Mile Distance from each other; by which Means one only could effectually attack the Fort, and could not have had immediate Assistance, if necessary?

5. WHY the Soldiers, who landed to take Possession of the Isle of *Aix*, were not, agreeable to the Rules of Discipline, punished for their Drunkenness, and Outrages committed upon the poor Inhabitants?

6. WHY the Fort was not effectually demolished on the Land, as well as the Sea-Side, especially as the V—Ad—l. employed no less than seven Days about that Work?

7. WHY the Army did not immediately land in the Night of the 23d, or 24th? Were the Obstructions from the Enemy's Army, or Batteries unsurmountable? If so, How could a young Officer, of a truly military *British* Spirit, offer, (as we are told he did) to land at the Head of his own Battalion, and undertake, without firing a Musquet, to cover the rest of the Army till it should

should be properly intrenched ? But perhaps, *Roche fort* was not to be taken without open Trenches, and the Season of the Year, and other Circumstances, therefore rendered the Attempt absurd : It appeared otherwise to you, Sir, (*meaning Mr. Pitt*) who, we are persuaded, took as much Pains to be informed, as ever any Man did in the like Situation.

BUT whence this later Intelligence ? Perhaps from the Prisoners taken at the Isle of *Aix* : If so, Was a Number of them examined separately, under the Assurances of the Attempt being to take place, and of their being treated as Spies upon the Army's Return, in Case they were found not to have spoke Truth ? And did their concurrent Testimony evince the almost Impossibility of succeeding ? Nothing else ought to have had any Weight, coming from Men actuated by every Motive to deceive and to deter."

THUS far my Author, who seems to have been informed of some material Circumstances relating to this famous Expedition, which the Public were not before acquainted with ; and which, if true, shew, that some of the Sea-Commanders contributed their Quota to the general Disappointment ; such as sending away the *Magnanime* in Chase with their only Pilot on Board ; the dividing their Ships to so great a Distance from each other, and the V— Ad——'s spending seven Days about the trifling Conquest of *Aix*. But tho' these little Slips in the Conduct of the Ad——ls might not affect the Generals, yet, in an Affair of this Im-

portance, it is of Consequence to know every Step that was taken both by the one and the other, that so every one's Merits, or Demerits, may receive their just Reward. But as the Admirals seems to be acquitted, in the general Opinion, of any Neglect or Misbehaviour, and the whole Blame thrown upon the Generals of the Army, we must confine our Observations to these only.

IN the Court-Martial, therefore, appointed for this Purpose, it may be supposed, that, upon Examination of the Witnesses, some such Questions as the following were asked.

1. AFTER the taking of *Aix*, five Days successively were spent in perfect Inactivity, both by the Fleet and Army, tho' in full View of *Rochelle*, *Rochefort*, and the whole Coast: Pray, in what Time were the Admirals and Generals employed during that Time, particularly the latter? If in holding Councils of War, what was the Subject of their Debates, the Schemes proposed, the Opinions delivered, and the Resolutions taken? What were the Objections, and who made them, to the immediate landing of the Troops?

2. IF Col. C——ke, who had formerly taken a View of *Rochefort*, and upon whose Testimony of its Weakness this Enterprize was set on Foot, was heard in those Councils; if his Plan for Execution was duly examined? Did he propose any Thing but what was rational or practicable? Did any of the Generals or Officers convince him

him of Errors in his Judgment, or Calculations?

3. WHO was the Person, and what was his Name, and of what Country, who, tho' he had no Command either in the Army or Navy, yet was admitted into your Councils of War? What was the Opinion or Advice he presumed to give? What Weight had it with the Officers who composed those Councils; who followed it, and who opposed it?

4. As it was A—l Br——k's Opinion, which he shewed to the General, before he sent it to the Admiral in Chief, that the first Embarkation might be landed, and the Transports returned, Why was not his Opinion followed? Who opposed it; and what were the Reasons urged against it, and by whom?

5. WHY was not Fort *Fouras* reduced, or at least attacked, as that would have been a proper Place of Retreat for the Troops, in Case they did not succeed at Land? 'Tis true, there is a wide Difference between the Opinion of Col. W—— and Adm—l K——. The first affirmed, that an Attack upon it was very practicable, that it might be surrounded on all Sides, and demolished by our Ships; the latter, that it was impossible for our large Ships to come near it, and that even a Bomb-ketch could not get nearer than three Miles of it. Which of these Opinions do you take to be the truest; or is there any Medium whereby they may be reconciled?

6. WHAT were the Reasons, or Arguments, which prevailed with the last Council of War that was held, to give over the Enterprize, and leave the Coast, without making any Attempt to land? And whether, in your Opinion, such an Attempt was practicable, or not?

THE List of the Members who composed this Court, I have seen, and I believe them to be all Gentlemen of Honour, and I hope have acted according to the Dictates of their Consciences. Yet if it has unfortunately happened, that Dissensions have arose among them, in the Course of the Trial, either from Difference of Opinion, in Regard to the Evidence produced for their Examination, or from any Favour, Affection, or Connection, which any of them might be willing to shew to their Friend or Relation (neither of which am I willing to suppose): I say, if such a Fatality has attended their Counsels, so as to prevent an Unanimity of Opinion, or a unanimous Decision; yet even this, tho' it may interrupt, yet it shall not conclude the Course of Justice. The Parliament will not suffer such public Offenders (if found such) to escape unpunished. The Members of that honourable Body can have no Bias upon them (at least in such a Case) to disappoint the earnest Expectations of their Constituents. They need not be told what large Sums were expended in fitting out this Expedition, therefore we assure ourselves, they will require a severe Account of those who have contributed to their Misapplication, or who, by their Misconduct, Ignorance, or Obstinacy, have occasioned

caſioned the ſquandering them away, to none, or a bad Purpoſe. We have no need to remind them of their Duty to their King and Country, or of what Importance it is to ſupport the Honour of the *British* Flag, or to recover it when meanly given up, or baſely loſt or injured. They know the ill Conſequences of ſuffering a Slackneſs of Diſcipline in the Army, eſpecially in Time of War, and how fatal the Want of Vigilance and Activity in their chief Officers may prove to the common Cauſe. And whatever ſhall be their Sentence, it will, we may depend upon it, be ratified by his Maſteſty, who has too great a Regard for his military Glory, and the Safety of his People, to let Offenders againſt either, go without Marks of his juſt Reſentment. So that we may reſt aſſured that, one Way or other, Juſtice will take Place, to the entire Satisfaction of the whole Kingdom.

BUT, after all, perhaps it will be ſaid, that ſuppoſing we had gained the End of the Expedition, and made a Conqueſt of *Rocheſort*, What great Damage would it have done the Enemy, or of what Uſe to us, ſince it's not probable we could keep it, had we made ourſelves Maſters of it.

To this I anſwer, That *Rocheſort* is the principal Port between *Breſt* and *Toulon*, for the building and repairing of Ships, and conſequently muſt contain a great Quantity of Timber, and large Magazines of Stores, Munition, and Materials of all Sorts for Marine Service, beſides
Ships

Ships on the Stocks, and riding at Anchor in the Harbour; the Destruction of all which would have maimed their Marine in a very sensible Manner. And as *France* has for some Time been endeavouring by all practicable Methods, to increase her Naval Force to an Equality with that of the *English*, such a Stab in her most vital Part, would have thrown her back, disconcerted her ambitious Schemes, and, for some Time, at least, disabled her from acting with that Vigour she has hitherto done. The Consternation which such a Blow, had it been struck, must have spread along the Coast, would have rendered a Conquest of the strongest maritime Towns and Forts very feasible. After the Reduction of *Rocheport*, the Army might have marched to *Rochelle*, and besieged it by Land, while the Fleet blocked it up, or attacked it by Sea. At least it would have been attended with one good Consequence, namely, the obliging *France* to recall a good Part of her Forces out of *Germany* to relieve it, and guard her own Coasts, and by that Means given the King of *Prussia* more Liberty to make Head against his most potent Enemy.

ON the other Hand, the greater the Damage we can do the common Enemy, the greater is the Advantage to *England*, and the sooner we shall oblige them to accept of reasonable Terms. *Rocheport*, could we have got and kept it, might have been of as great Use to our Trade in the Bay of *Biscay*, and all along that Coast, as *Gibraltar* is in the *Mediterranean*. It would have given a free Opening to our Commerce in those Parts,
and

and a constant Check to the *French*. And being Masters of such a noble Harbour, our Men of War and Merchantmen would have always had a Place of Safety to retreat to, from the furious Winds and turbulent Storms which are common in the Bay. The Conquest of *Rochefort* must have been soon followed by the contiguous Islands, *Rhee*, *Oleron*, *Aix*, &c. Had this been effected, there is the greatest Probability, that the *French* would gladly have restored *Minorca*, in Exchange for so valuable a Part of their lost Territories. This alone, would have been an ample Recompence for the vast Sums expended in fitting out this Expedition, and the Nation, entirely satisfied, would, with the greatest Alacrity, have contributed to the Charge of any future Enterprize.

BUT supposing it would not have been advisable to have kept *Rochefort* after we had taken it, we could at least have demolished it; which, considering its Importance to the *French*, must have been a vast Detriment to their Marine, and a weakening of their Naval Power; which is, or ought to be, one of the principal Objects of the present War.

THAT an Attack upon *Rochefort* was practicable, appears from the Testimony of Col. C—ke, who had an Opportunity of seeing and noting its Weakness, and those Parts of it that were least defensible; from that of Capt. *Howe*, who, with two or three of his Friends went ashore, and walked for some Time on the Strand; and from the Fewness of the Troops that were left

left to guard the Coast, not half the Number (as by good Intelligence our Ministers were informed) of those we sent to make the Attempt.

By this short View of the Advantages which the Success of this Expedition would have procured us, we may judge of the Importance of it, and that our Failure in it must necessarily be productive of very bad Consequences. The *British* Arms, once so formidable to our Enemies, are now (as well as our Politics) become their standing Jest. And we have lived to see the Day, when an *English* General would run no Hazard to acquire Laurels either for himself or his Country. Can such a Chief read the Story of a *Cromwel*, a *Marlborough*, a *Peterborough*, and many other illustrious Names, that make the brightest Figure in our Annals, and not blush for his own Pusillanimity and want of Resolution, to encounter an imaginary Danger? It affords Matter not only for the Resentment, but the Grief of all true Patriots, to see a Branch of an honourable Family, whose Ancestors rendered themselves respectable for their Bravery and heroic Actions, so much degenerated from so noble a Stock, and a Disgrace to a Name once revered and esteemed.

*Sed pudet hæc Opprobria nobis dici
potuisse, & non potuisse refelli.*

F I N I S.



